

APPENDIX Q

EXAMPLES OF EXISTING REGIONAL EFFORTS

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Existing regional efforts provide examples of the types of work that could be supported by enhancing State support of regional initiatives. In many areas along Maine's coast there are interested and active members of the public that have taken it upon themselves to organize into regional groups in order to make a positive contribution to improved nearshore marine management. These groups vary in their mission statements and purpose, but all work regionally to advance the goals of their organization. In many cases, a bay is the geographic area around which they are organized (Friends of Casco Bay, Friends of Taunton Bay, Friends of Blue Hill Bay, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, East Penobscot Bay Environmental Alliance, etc). In other cases, watersheds are the geography around which a group may form. In addition to these citizen initiated groups, there are also entities that have been more formally created in Maine statute to provide for the regional management of river and lake resources, including the Saco River Corridor Commission and the Cobbossee Watershed District. Finally, federal designations can be the impetus for a regional effort, as in the case of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership.

The majority of the examples of existing groups are citizen groups organized for stewardship or advocacy of their region with a focus on environmental health. Some examples of these groups and their mission or purpose statements include:

- Friends of Casco Bay: Friends of Casco Bay works year-round to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay.
- Friends of Merrymeeting Bay: To preserve, protect, and improve the unique ecosystems of Merrymeeting Bay. We fulfill this mission through education, research, membership activities, and the promotion and stewardship of conservation easements.
- Friends of Blue Hill Bay: Friends of Blue Hill Bay is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the natural ecology, traditional marine fisheries and the unique aesthetic quality of Blue Hill Bay.
- Friends of Taunton Bay: The purpose of the Friends of Taunton Bay is to organize citizens for the well-being of the bay and for its protection from all forms of degradation.
- East Penobscot Bay Environmental Alliance: The mission of EPBEA is to conserve our coast and to promote the environmentally appropriate use of East Penobscot Bay.

Some regional stewardship efforts are organized around watersheds, as in the following example:

- Bagaduce Watershed Association: The Bagaduce Watershed Association seeks to act as Riverkeepers for the Bagaduce River, to protect indigenous flora and fauna to live and prosper on the River, and to encourage and maintain the highest possible quality of the River environment, including water, air, adjoining field and forest land, views and existing commercial and recreational uses.

There are also a number of Resource Centers in Maine, include one in Cobscook Bay and one in Penobscot Bay. These entities emphasize a community based approach to resource management and sustainable economic development, and function as information repositories. Their mission statements are as follows:

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- Cobscook Bay Resource Center: To encourage and strengthen community-based approaches to resource management and sustainable economic development in the Cobscook Bay region, the Bay of Fundy, and the Gulf of Maine.
- Penobscot East Resource Center: To energize and facilitate responsible community-based fisheries management, collaborative marine science, and sustainable economic development to benefit the fishermen and communities of Penobscot Bay and the Eastern Gulf of Maine.

Some regional entities are codified in Maine statute. The Saco River Corridor Commission is one such example:

- Saco River Corridor Commission: The Saco River Corridor Commission is committed to protect public health, safety and the quality of life for the State of Maine through the regulation of land and water uses, protection and conservation of the region's unique and exceptional natural resources and through the prevention of impacts caused by incompatible development.

Other regional entities are the result of a federal designation. Casco Bay was designated an “estuary of national significance” in 1990, and included in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s National Estuary Program. As a result, the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership was formed. Their mission is as follows:

- Casco Bay Estuary Partnership: The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership is devoted to protecting and restoring the water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat of the Casco Bay ecosystem, while ensuring compatible human uses.

While this is just an illustrative list of the types of efforts that currently exist, a more complete listing of non-governmental entities with an interest in the Gulf of Maine and its watershed can be accessed through the website of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment. A search tool is provided at: http://www.gulfofmaine.org/ngo_directory.